Mr. *G E E*'s

SERMON

Before the

QUEEN

AT

WHITE-HALL,

Auguſt 7. 1692.

M. S. T.

SERMON

DE

QUELEN

AT

HALL,

Aug. 7. 1692.

Of the Improvement of Time.

A SERMON

Preach'd before the

QUEEN

AT

WHITE-HALL,

August 7. 1692.

By EDWARD GEE, Rector of St. *Benedict* by *Paul's-Wharff*, and Chaplain in Ordinary to Their Majesties.

By Her Majesties Special Command.

LONDON,
Printed for *Brab. Aylmer* in *Cornhill*, and *Sam. Smith* in St. *Paul's* Church-yard. 1692.

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Epheſians V. *Verſ.* 16.

Redeeming the Time, becauſe the days are Evil.

ST. *Paul* in this Epiſtle having ſhewn them to whom it was ſent, the Great Excellency of the Chriſtian Religion, and the mighty Advantages and Privileges that might be received from the hearty belief of it; proceeds to ſhew what a wonderful Change had been made in their Condition by embracing the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt; That whereas before their knowing and believing that Chriſtian Doctrin, they were covered with Darkneſs, and altogether loſt in Vanity and Error, and might be ſaid to be even *dead in Treſ-*

Ephes. 2. 1. *paſſes and Sins*, They were now become Children of Light, by being the Children of God, their Minds were enlighten'd, and —— 5. themſelves *quickened*, and raiſed as it were from the dead *to ſit together in heavenly places* —— 6. *in Chriſt Jeſus.*

Having thus laid down the mighty Things which had been done for them, Our Apoſtle does very eaſily and very regularly too, paſs on to inform them, what *They* alſo were to do, and what returns *They* were to make to God for ſuch his abundant Mercy to them. Upon this he gives them a great many Directions and Rules for the Management of themſelves ſo as to pleaſe God in every Condition and ſtate of Life whatſoever, whether of Married or Free, whether of Publick or Private, of Son or of Servant; but above all he takes heed to mind them of their Care of *That*, in which all theſe things were to be done, all the Duties he mentioned were to be performed; and that is, the Good Improvement of their Time, that they would loſe none of that, ſince they had ſuch occaſion for it all, and yet were in ſuch apparent Danger of loſing too much of it, through the Wickedneſs of the World they muſt Converſe with; *Redeeming the Time, becauſe the days are evil.*

Which

Which Words afford us theſe things for our Conſideration,

1ſt. What great Reaſon we have all to improve and to make a good uſe of our Time.

2ly. How much more Reaſon we have to Redeem it, and to double our Diligence, when we have loſt any great ſhare of it.

3ly. To inquire what can be the Hindrances of our Care in a Matter of ſo much moment.

4ly. To give ſome Rules herein, and to exhort to the Practice of them.

1ſt. What great Reaſon we all have to improve, and to make a good Uſe of our Time.

One would think it the moſt eaſie thing in the World to convince Mankind of the Truth hereof; but I know not well how it comes to paſs that this, which might challenge our Aſſent upon the very naming of it, *That every Man ought to make the beſt uſe of Time*, ſhould be ſo little regarded by the far greateſt part of the World; and nothing can be more ſtrange than this, that while all the World, the Wiſe and the Fooliſh are agreed in their

valuing ſo much thoſe things which they love and take delight in, They ſhould agree alſo in having little or no regard for Time, by which only they can obtain any of thoſe things they ſo much prize and long after.

However, every Man muſt acknowledge the very great Reaſon there is for us all to improve and to make a good Uſe of Time, whenever he is ſerious, or would but conſider theſe things with me,

1ſt. How great a Work every Chriſtian has upon his Hands to perform.

2ly. How many Impediments He will meet with in his diſcharge of it.

3ly. How ſhort the time of our Sojourning here in this World muſt be. And

4ly. How much ſhorter the Miſpending of our Time does generally make it.

1ſt. How Great a Work every Chriſtian has upon his Hands to perform.

Indeed

Indeed if One were to judge of the Buſineſs of too many Chriſtians by their Behaviour, one would be able to make but a very indifferent Judgment concerning it. To behold the Courſe of the World, would tempt a Man to believe that neither Reaſon nor Religion were regarded by the far greateſt part in it: to ſee ſome as unactive and idle, as if they had no more to do than the Flower in the Garden, or the Graſs upon the Ground, had nothing to do but to receive Nouriſhment, and grow; To ſee others Sotting away their Time, haunting the Publick Houſes continually, and diſtinguiſhing their whole Time into but three parts, the firſt of which they ſpend in Sleeping, the ſecond in Eating, the third and greateſt in Drinking; to ſee them minding nothing but what is extravagant and unmanly, loving no Pleaſures but what are unlawful, giving their Strength to ſtrange Women, their Ears, their Eyes, and all their Senſes up to thoſe Charms, which are often Bitterneſs in the Taſte it ſelf, but moſt certainly Shame and Deſtruction at the laſt: To ſee ſome from whom one might expect a better Senſe of Religion, reſtleſs, and turning every Stone, trying every way to be Rich, and minding nothing elſe but to leave a great Eſtate, and reſolved to do

it,

it, though at the Expence of Religion and Conſcience, of Honour and of Juſtice, though they muſt diſregard the Tears as well as the Rights of Widows and Orphans, and trample upon the Helpleſs and Afflicted to come at thoſe Eſtates they have already ſwallowed in their Deſire: To ſee others Sacrificing all they have in this World to Ambition, Proſtituting their Virtue and Honour, Flattering and uſing the worſt of Men, if they will but give a lift towards that Height they are gazing at, and preferring Greatneſs, though it prove never ſo ſhort-liv'd, to all the Virtue, and Honour, and Conſcience in the World. To ſee theſe and a great many other, as ridiculous Scenes of Humane Actions and Behaviour here, too tedious to be mentioned or minded, muſt make one to conclude, either that Mankind are but a ſort of Animals devoid of Reaſon, that excel the Serpent and the Ape only in a little Cunning, as they excel the reſt of their Fellow-Creatures, or that there is no God in Heaven, and they may do whatever is right in their own Eyes, as the *Iſraelites* did when they had no King, on Earth, or that they are for ſuch their Behaviour inexcuſable Madmen.

And

And Mad-men they are, ſince how buſie ſoever they are about all theſe things, this was not their Buſineſs into this World; and how much ſoever they may have pleas'd themſelves in their ſeveral Actions, yet God can never be pleaſed with them, ſince it was for another, a more noble Purpoſe, that He Created Man upon the Face of this Earth: He planted us here, as in a place of Tryal, He appointed us a Work, which is no leſs than to purchaſe a bleſſed Immortality for our Bodies as well as our Souls in his Kingdom of Heaven, by our leading Lives of Piety and Virtue here. This is our chief Buſineſs into this World, and the Care of it ought to be conſtantly in our Eye, not only for the Worth, but alſo for the Difficulty of it: It is a difficult Work indeed, but were it Ten Thouſand times more difficult than it is, there is a Reward that would deſerve it all: But God has been infinitely gracious to us in this Reſpect, has been far from making the Difficulty equal to the Greatneſs of this bleſſed Reward.

This

This however ought always to affect us, that it is a great and large Work, and this every one does know that has made never ſo little Progreſs in it. How much Study and Diligence is neceſſary to obtain, and to preſerve a juſt Knowledge of God and his Attributes, and of that wonderful Diſpenſation towards the Sons of Men by his own ever bleſſed Son? To preſerve our Faith pure and undefil'd from the Arts of Hereticks, and others that are ſtill laying wait to deceive with their enticing Words? To have our Judgments rightly informed, and firmly ſettled as to Matters of Faith and Knowledge, and the whole Nature of our Chriſtian Duty? How difficult a Task does it prove to incline the Will, and ſubdue it to the Obedience of Reaſon and Religion, to keep it even and conſtant to the Choice of real Good, and our Chriſtian Duty? What a ſevere and laſting Conflict muſt we have with thoſe Corrupt Affections, thoſe unruly Deſires, and inordinate Paſſions that are always hanging about us, and ready to betray us upon every Occaſion, upon the leaſt Temptation that preſents it ſelf? Theſe muſt all (in order to that Life which God requires

of

of us) be mortified, and reſtrain'd, and if we can, perfectly ſubdued.

We have not only a great many Virtues to learn and practiſe, but a great many Vices to unlearn, which we muſt thank our own Folly for. We have not only Vices that muſt be parted with, but too many among us great habits of them, and what Time, and Pains, and Diligence are neceſſary to the curing our Selves of any one habit of Wickedneſs! It was with ſome Care and Regret that we did bring our ſelves to venture on ſuch or ſuch a Waſting Sin, it was with more Pains and Diligence that we brought our ſelves to commit it with Greedineſs, and a particular Pleaſure in it: and can all this be undone and changed in a Moment, and when we have a mind? It muſt be with far more Pains, and Care, and Diligence, that we can tear it from our Breaſt, abandon, and quite forſake it, and not only forſake it, but frame our Mind, our Will, and our Temper, to that Virtue which is ſo contrary to it. One brisk Onſet cannot do our Buſineſs herein; we may with Courage and Reſolution ſet upon theſe Home-bred Enemies, and over-come them; but how long muſt it be before we can rec-

kon our ſelves truly Conquerors over our fleſhly Luſts?

What a large Field then is that of the Knowledge, which is neceſſary as we are Chriſtians, how many are the Snares and the Sins that we muſt (upon our greateſt Peril) avoid and preſerve our ſelves unſpotted from? Have we then all of us ſo great, and ſo very large a Work as this is to perform? What Time can be enough for it? Bleſſed God! What Knowledge and Skill, and Diligence and Application, is neceſſary for the knowing and performing this our Duty, what Time can be too much for ſuch Buſineſs? And yet Mankind muſt certainly think its far from requiring all our Time, ſince they commonly do ſpend ſo much of it on quite other Matters. It was that Great Father of the Phyſicians Advice or Complaint, *That Life was ſhort, but Art long*, that Men had a great deal to learn, but too little time to acquire it in; how much more Reaſon has the Chriſtian to cry out, that his Work is great, but his Life too ſhort for it? and yet how many of us do ſquander away even that which we have.

There

There is too much of our precious Time forc'd away from us by the Neceſſities of our Nature, or our Relation and Care of others, how can we then find in our Heart to throw the reſt away after it? Is not the Race mark'd out for us, is not our Task allotted, and the time it muſt be done in, while it is Light? Let us then but inquire at home, and ſee how we have manag'd our Selves or our Time; if our Life be ſo ſhort, and our Work ſo great, have we employ'd it all therein? Is ſo much knowledge of God and his Laws neceſſary to our ever being Happy, and have we made it our conſtant Care to ſtudy God's Word, to conſult thoſe Lips that ſhould preſerve Knowledge, and uſed all the Helps that might direct us in this? Are there ſo many Virtues that God would have us Adorn our ſelves with, and ſo many Errors that we muſt abandon, and guard our Heart and our Life againſt with all Diligence, how much Time then have we employ'd to gain the one, or baniſh the other? Let us ask our own Hearts what one Virtue it is we are entirely in Poſſeſſion of, what one Vice it is, that we have perfectly rid our Selves of? Has all the Time we have employ'd, as we ought, not made us Maſter of any one Virtue, nor ſo much as Conqueror over any one Vice, and can we think we have enough of

Time, and to ſpare, which we may employ as our ſelves pleaſe? If all the Time that ſome of us have been in this World, (and how much has that been!) has not yet taught them one line, as I may ſay, of this large Leſſon, what time, how many hundreds of Years would be neceſſary to teach ſuch their whole Duty in?

This Conſideration therefore ſhould awaken us all, ſhould prompt us to Diligence and Induſtry in our Chriſtian Duty, ſince there is no Danger of our Times being too long for the Learning and Practice of our Duty, but too much Reaſon to fear that it may prove too ſhort; eſpecially if we remember the ſecond Reaſon for this our Care, *viz.*

2ly. How many Impediments He will meet with in his diſcharge of it.

If our Task be large enough for our whole Time, as I have already proved, what Apprehenſions ſhould it cauſe in us to conſider how much of that Time (which was all but neceſſary and little enough) is raviſhed from us by our neceſſary Occaſions, how much more is ſtolen from it by our Sins and our Folly? Our Life is very fitly called in Scripture a Warfare, ſince if we look about us, and conſider how much

much we have to do, and what great Difficulties we have to ſtruggle through, it would make the ſtouteſt Heart to Deſpond, but for the Grace of God, that will ſtrengthen and aſſiſt us, but for the Reward that will ſo glorioufly Crown us after our Succeſs in the Conflicts we ſhall be engag'd in here below.

God has not been ſo liberal to us in the Term of our Lives, that we ſhould be ſo laviſh, and ſquander away ſuch large Portions of it. What a great ſhare of our Time does Neceſſity force from us? Our Sleep does almoſt cut our Life in two, and take an equal part; the ſatisfying of thoſe daily returning Wants of Food and Nouriſhment does take up at leaſt a third part of what remains; and for the reſt, how much does lawful Recreation take for its ſhare, how much does want of Health, or the Care of a weak and uneven ſtate of Health take alſo for its certain part? After ſuch a Diviſion one would think little could be left for worldly Concerns, and none at all for other Matters, and yet we ſee how much of their Time does the Buſineſs and Employments of Mankind require, how much Care, and Time, and Diligence, is neceſſary to procure but a tolerable Subſiſtance for the far greateſt part in the World: Indeed this Time is all ſpar'd to them who have theſe things

things left to their Hands, that are born to large Eſtates, and have no occaſion to ſpend any of their Time this way; but then alas, Experience ſhews us, that too many of theſe who have ſo much more Time to ſpare than others, do generally make the leaſt and worſt Uſe of it. Not only our own Affairs, but thoſe of Relations and of Friends, nay, of meer Strangers, ſwallow up great part of our Time, and would ſpend us more of it, if Nature and Neceſſity would but give leave.

Let us then compute our Time, and ſee what can remain, when Sleep and Nouriſhment, and Recreation and Health, and Buſineſs, have carried off ſuch large Shares, have we ſuch a mighty Portion left for that our Great Work, for the taking Care of our Laſt and Greateſt Concern? Would we but reflect a while on this account, it would make us bluſh, and be heartily aſham'd for all the Time we have ever miſpent in Sin and Folly; for theſe alas, crowd into the account of Impediments, and make too too great a Figure there, though we want no ſuch Hindrances. One would think Men could have no leaſure for the Service of theſe, that their manifold Buſineſs would have kept them always out of harms way, if we did not, to our Sorrow ſee, that though Men do ſo often

ten complain that their Buſineſs takes up their whole Time, that they can get no part of the day to employ as they willingly ſhould, and own they ought, in Holy Duties, yet that they can and will rob their Buſineſs to ſpend upon their Luſts and Pleaſures; That they will borrow for a Boon Companion, for a Wanton Harlot, or a Drunken Club, though they will not for Religious Matters, Reading good Books, or to dedicate it either to the Publick or Private Worſhip of their God.

Are not theſe then Hindrances big enough in our Great Work, which our Neceſſities and our Buſineſs give us? What muſt we ſay then when Wickedneſs comes in for a ſhare, and robs us moſt of all, when it's content with no mean ſhare, but inſinuates more and more, till all other Care is quite laid aſide, and it engroſſes our whole Time? Should not this perſuade us, ſhould it not teach us, that ſince the Buſineſs is really ſo great for which we were brought into this World, and the Time ſo uncertain, that we have to finiſh it in; that want of Time will not paſs for Excuſe in the other World, when our Sins and our Luſts have ſquander'd ſo much of it here; that ſince God has ſo form'd our Nature and our Tempers, that a great part of our Time muſt certainly be employ'd

ploy'd in the Care of theſe, and a great deal more of it may be ſnatch'd from us by Sickneſs or uncertain Health; we ſhould never forget to employ well that Time which we can only call our own, to emprove all thoſe Seaſons, and Opportunities which God vouchſafes, and Time does reach out to us, to all the great and good Purpoſes for which our Lord did place us here.

But alas, we forget all this, we do not only forget that our Work is ſo great, and that the Impediments we meet with in this our Journey are ſo many, but which is altogether as unhappy, we forget in the Third place,

3ly. How ſhort the Time of our Sojourning here in this World muſt be.

It has been an old and a great Complaint of the Shortneſs of Humane Life, and if when the Lives of Men were far longer than they now are, and they had lived twice as long as the Generality of the World now does, they could
Gen. 47. 9. complain that their days *had been few*: We muſt not wonder at any Complaints we hear now. Our Life is fitly compar'd in Gods Word to the Graſs of the Field, to the more tender Flower, which though it is ſometime in growing

ing up, yet ſoon fades, is withered and gone; and as if this was not ſufficient to Convince us of the Shortneſs and Vanity of our Lives, the Scripture has thought fit to deſcend, and make even a Vapour and a Shadow the Emblems of our ſhort and fading Time, and to uſe them often as the fitteſt Emblems to expreſs it by. *Job*'s Friend pleads this in excuſe for his Ignorance, and it will ſerve for the reſt of Mankind, *Job* 8. 9. *For we are but of Yeſterday, and know nothing, becauſe our days upon Earth are a Shadow:* And *Job* himſelf concludes this as the common Lot to us all, that we are but of few days, and which is more Unhappy, that they are full of Trouble; That *Man cometh forth* [indeed] *like a Flower, but is cut down; that he fleeth alſo as a Shadow, and continues not.* Job 14. 1, 2.

And the ſame Senſe have the wiſer part of the Heathen World had of the Condition of Mankind, that his Life is very ſhort, too ſhort in their Opinion for ſo Noble and ſo Wiſe a Creature: They have compar'd it to a meer Point, and indeed, what is the longeſt Life more to the days of Eternity? They have laught at the dividing this little Point into ſo many parts, but moſt of all at Mankind, for miſimploying any part thereof. And does it not appear the ſame to us all? As for the Time paſt, for all

the Years we have lived hitherto, how wonderfully ſhort and inconſiderable does it appear to us? How little a Time is it, think we all, ſince we were Children, ſince we came abroad into the World? It's all gone as ſwiftly as a Shadow, and is vaniſh'd as if it had been really but a Vapour. The Time preſent of our Life, which is all that we can juſtly call the time of Life, how fleeting and uncertain is it alſo, and how haſty to be gone? How little will it ſtay for us? It does not wait our leiſure, nor can attend till we'll be pleaſed to employ it to its juſt and proper uſe: We may call it our own indeed, and it's all we can call ſo; but then it will not for all that be at our Command, there is another Lord over it as well as us, that will not let it wait for us, nor ſtay for our Appointments. And if our preſent time of Life be ſo very little in our Power, what ſhall we ſay concerning that part of it, which is not yet in View, but wholly in the Hands of God, and known only to him, whether we ſhall ſee it ever at all? This is the State of Human Life, and can this deſerve to be thought otherwiſe of than as very ſhort and very uncertain? We get through indeed a great many Months and Years, ſome a very great many; but then, if we take a Stand and look back, it appears nothing, is as inviſible as the

Morrow

Morrow to us all, as the day that is not yet in Being.

This is God's fatal and irreverſible Decree upon us; it is not only appointed for us all to Die, but to die ſoon, after a few years of Labour and Sorrow here: We begin the World as if we knew all this before we came out of the Womb; we Lament betimes as it were our hard Fate, that we muſt live ſo few Years here, and thoſe too not Happily: As ſoon as we are born, we draw to our End, and ſome indeed do end as ſoon as they have begun; they enter the Stage of this World indeed, but like Mutes, they have no other part there but to be Seen, and then immediately are carried off; ſome ſtay longer indeed upon it, but there are too few that ſtay out the laſt Scene; their Generation is haſtned off to make room for the next that is to come, and ſo the World does very quickly change all its Inhabitants, and in a ſhort ſpace of Years, ſhews a perfectly new Set of Faces there.

Are all things then in ſuch a changing condition? Is it ſo diminutive a part of Time that we are ſuffer'd to ſtay here before our Great Change? And is our Life it ſelf ſo much ſhort-

ſhorter in Compariſon, and ſo uncertain, that when we are going to Sleep, the Cunningeſt Man ith' World cannot aſſure us that we ſhall wake in this Life any more; that after we are riſen, we ſhall ever come into a Bed to take our Reſt again? Are all things, I ſay, in ſuch a condition with us, and can we forgive our ſelves the miſpending all our precions Time, or too great a ſhare of it? May we be beckon'd out, or juſtled off our preſent Station ſo very ſoon, and can we find in our Hearts to have done nothing that became us either as Men or Chriſtians? Have we but one day of Life to do all our mighty Buſineſs in, and can we afford to ſtand it all out idle and gazing? This is Folly indeed, and what God will never forgive us, tho we are ſo over-kind to our ſelves. Our Life ſpends as faſt, and our Hours run off as ſwiftly while we are loytering and gazing about us, as when we are diligent at our proper Work.

Let us therefore, ſince we are certain to have but little of Time allotted to our ſhare, be careful to ſpend all that little well; let not Buſineſs, or Diverſion, or Friends, rob us too much, or ſpend too much of our ſmall Stock; but let us rather borrow from each of them all the Time we can to Dedicate to the Glory of

of our Great God, and to the Saving of our Immortal Souls: But above all, let us not ſuffer Sinful Pleaſures to rob us alſo. If we do not keep directly on in our way without fainting towards our Journey's end, let us not for God's ſake loſe our ſelves ſo far as to turn quite back, and go directly from it; if we ſcarce have Time or Strength to perform this our Courſe once, let's not think of running it all twice over without Strength or Time. We have no continuing City here below, we belong to another, which we muſt make all our way to get to with what ſpeed we can, ſince we have but one Day to do it in, and when the Night comes, we are ſure to be wildred and loſt and quite excluded.

But further, we are not only to conſider how great our Work is, how many the Impediments are, and how ſhort our Time to do all in muſt be, but this alſo ſhould add very much to our Care to reflect,

4ly. How much ſhorter the Miſpending of our Time does generally make it.

In

In their worldly Affairs Men do always conclude, that the not Employing that Time to their chief Buſineſs for which it was allotted, is generally a direct Miſpending of it, though it ſhould not be quite loſt, but employ'd about Things that are of leſs Concern: This is their Judgment about the Matters that concern this World, that concern their Health or Eſtate here; but it is not in thoſe Spiritual Affairs, that belong to the Soul and another State; they can with Patience enough ſuffer the Time allotted to theſe Beſt Things to be raviſhed from them, without Noiſe, or any of the Paſſion with which they are ſo Loud, when they are interrupted in their other Affairs: It too often proves a Grateful Diverſion to be diſturb'd in their Care of theſe, and they can be ſo good-natur'd as not only to forgive others their taking from them that their ſet Time for Religious Duties, but to forgive themſelves as eaſily, when they neglect them, even upon the moſt frivolous Pretences. But theſe Men really are too too much good-natur'd, and it were Happy for them if they had a great deal leſs of this which they call Good Nature, and a great deal more of that, which the World will call Moroſe Incivility: It would really be much better, and much more Happy for them by a little of *This* to ſecure and reſcue that Time where-

wherein they might make themſelves everlaſtingly Bleſſed, than by the help of *the Other* to loſe their Time, and their Soul together.

This is a Concern wherein the leaſt loſs is very dangerous, ſince the Stake is ſo very great, and therefore no Care of ours can be too great for it. We do not only loſe all that our Time that is Miſpent on other things than that of our great Concern in this Life, but our Miſpending does too often prey upon our Time it ſelf, and cut that ſhorter: The Time we ſquander away in idle Speculations, or in things that are not directly Sinful, will, whenever we come to our ſelves, be a Grief of Heart unto us, ſince we ſhall then find and know, that we had a far better Uſe to have employ'd it to: But with what Heart ſhall we behold our ſelves, when we find that all the Time we have ſpent in Sin, did directly tend to the ſhortening of our days, as it ever moſt certainly did. There are none of thoſe Sinful Pleaſures, and Drunken Bouts, there is no Revelling, nor Wantonneſs, but coſts the Man that is employ'd therein, too much of his Life, and often all that is remaining of it. Without being Phyſician, every one can ſee how often Dropſy and Gout are the Fruits of Drunkenneſs, Conſumption and Palſy, and Diſeaſes not fit

fit to be nam'd, are the certain Effects of unlawful and Unchaſt Pleaſures: Need any Man be told, that theſe cut ſhort the Life of Man? The Sinner himſelf needs it leaſt of all, who feels to his too great Coſt, and by dear Experience, the diſmal Truth of it; The Life that's cark'd with anxious Cares for the getting Wealth, that will ſee no end, nor dare to taſte the Fruit of all its Care, but ventures Health, and Friends, and Life it ſelf, and which is more, all his future Hopes for another Bag, is far from ſcaping free on this Account: And there is no other Vice that Men allow themſelves in, which has not this Skill, and never fails, to ſhorten the Lives of thoſe that are ſo blindly fond of it. But if theſe Sinners ſhould be ſo Diſcreet in their Folly, and Temperate as it were in theſe their Extravagancies, as not to haſten too ſoon their End by them, yet this can give them but ſmall Comfort, ſince God may be provok'd by their Sins, ſo far as to cut off their Days, and ſhorten (as he often has done) the Lives of all ſuch careleſs and bold Sinners: And this Conſideration ought to be well weighed by them all, who are ſo daring againſt God; for whatever Care may do for them againſt their own, or other Mens Vices, it can do nothing for them againſt the Vengeance of an Offended God,

God, which can never miſs its aim, or return again empty without accompliſhing that Judgment upon Careleſs and Wicked Men which God has appointed it. And how often has he appointed and declar'd, that they who make the worſt uſe of Time, ſhall have the leaſt ſhare of it to Miſpend; that he will cut off half the days of the Wicked, and haſten them off the Stage of this World to Judgment, who of all Men Living are the leaſt prepar'd for it? It is Employing our Time well, and the Fear of our God that will prolong our days, but for the Years of the *Wicked*, He has declar'd, *That they ſhall be ſhorten'd. The Candle of the Wicked is often* ſoon *put out*; and when Men begin too ſoon, when they ſet up for Atheiſtical Debauchees in the Bloom of their Years, God's Judgment can be as quick with them, and not only ſhorten the days of their Youth it ſelf, but cover them (and their Memory alſo) with Shame and Diſgrace.

Prov. 10. 27.

Job 21. 17.

Having now gone through all the Reaſons I did believe ſufficient in this Matter, it is Time to take a ſhort View of them altogether, and to ſee what urgent and unavoidable Neceſſity they lay upon us to be very ſtrict in the Improvement of our Time, ſince it is by the Benefit of this alone that we can

do any part of our greateſt Work in this World. Can we ſuffer our ſelves to be ruſted with Idleneſs, or worn out in the Service of Sin and Luſts, who have no leſs a Work on our Hands than the gaining Heaven? Let us up and be doing, ſince if we Faint, we ſhall get nothing but what we ſhall for ever after wiſh we had eſcaped; but if we Faint not, we ſhall be ſecure of an exceeding great Reward, which will infinitely ſurpaſs all the Pains that we can ever take to obtain it.

We know that our Work is great, we ſee that our Hindrances and Impediments are too many, and we cannot but feel, that the Time of our Sojourning here muſt not be long. What Time can we have for the Service of Sin, who have not enough for our lawful Concerns, but eſpecially for our greateſt Work? And yet we can rob from theſe to ſpend upon our Luſts, which do not only Miſpend, but ſhorten our Time, which do not only give us nothing for it, but do moſt wickedly rob us alſo of *That* wherein we might have made ſome amends to God for our paſt Follies. But above all, let us look up to the Judgment, which is ſo like to overtake us in our Sin, and cut off our Life for our Wickedneſs, and often-

oftentimes in the very Act of it. Awake then, O thou who ſleepeſt, Awake to Righteouſneſs, and give thy Strength and thy Time to God; let him only have the continual Service of it, who will ſo abundantly reward it.

I cannot enter upon the next Particular, which was to ſhew, *How much more Reaſon we have to Redeem our Time, and to double our Diligence, when we have loſt any great ſhare of it.* I have already treſpaſt on your Patience too far, and I hope I need add no more to Convince us how great a Concern we all ought to have for our Precious Time; if what I have already ſaid does not, I deſpair of being able to urge any thing further that can teach us this Wiſe Leſſon. Let us Reflect then with Care on all theſe Reaſons, and ſince ſo much of Time ſlips from us Uſeleſs, let us be careful of the reſt, that while it is called Day, and we have Time, we may be employ'd about our Maſter's Buſineſs, and when he calls us hence, we may be found at it. But for all that Time which we have loſt, and is irrecoverably gone, Let us go to the Bleſſed Jeſus, that moſt Merciful Saviour, Let us caſt our ſelves at his Feet, and with Contrite Hearts bewail the Loſs and the Abuſe of our paſt Time, and beg of Him, that He would paſs over

over the Follies of our Child-hood, that He would not remember the Sins of our Youth, nor the more grievous Tranſgreſſions of our Riper Years, but would Forgive us all that is paſt, and grant us his Grace, that we may all of us henceforth Serve and Pleaſe Him in Newneſs of Life, to His Glory, and our Salvation. *Amen.*

FINIS.